

Paper 1

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Wednesday 15 May 2013

Culture & Sport

Portfolio

1. Within my portfolio, I have responsibility for matters concerning the arts, sport, outdoor recreation, landscapes, archives, libraries, museums and the historic environment. I am also the lead Minister for the Active Travel (Wales) Bill.
2. I strongly believe that these policy areas are vital to Wales and can play an important role in delivering this Government's commitments on key issues such as quality of life, health, poverty and the economy.
3. I have also been keen to stress, since coming into post, that I recognise the intrinsic value of sport and the arts in Wales. Whilst they are certainly key areas to consider alongside our ambitions to make Wales a more healthy and prosperous nation, they have an importance of themselves.
4. I intend to take action to deliver the things that make a difference to the people we serve, their families and our communities - now and in the future.
5. The Programme for Government (PfG) identifies many of the specific actions I am taking. It also sets out milestones and indicators to assess progress in tackling the long-term challenges facing Wales.
6. As you know, I have particular accountability for ensuring delivery is on track in a number of areas within the programme – most notably in the chapters covering Tackling Poverty (9), Rural Communities (10), Environment and Sustainability (11) and the Culture and Heritage of Wales (12).

Priorities & Progress

7. Whilst it is not possible to address my entire portfolio in this paper, I have outlined below further details on some of my priorities, giving consideration to specific areas this and other Committees have identified as of particular interest to it.

Arts

8. I am very mindful of the role of the arts in our society, both as a source of employment but also as a source of enjoyment and learning.

9. All communities benefit from access to the arts, they can be a powerful way of working with the community to develop social and communication skills, self advocacy and empowerment. The forthcoming report from Professor Dai Smith, on the Arts in Education, jointly commissioned by the Minister for Education and Skills and former Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage, will underline the role the arts can play in schools, inspiring young people from deprived backgrounds and switching them on to learning.
10. I firmly believe that investment in the arts and culture and the historic environment more generally can assist the social and economic development of Wales in many ways: through cultural tourism; regeneration; community development; and employment. They are a key component of the quality of life that an area can offer; and we know that this is a key factor in whether people want to live there, work there, visit or invest there.
11. I shall be working with the Arts Council of Wales to prioritise some of Wales' most disadvantaged communities. There is a need to foster change, empowerment, ownership – to allow people to find their voice to bring together skilled arts professionals with communities and individuals. I want to see work that people can connect with, of the highest artistic standards. Unique, authentic, life-affirming work: at best, arts can be transformational.
12. I support the arms-length funding of the arts, within that my expectations for the arts include: making arts accessible to people who cannot be regular ticket buyers at big venues and taking exhibitions and performances to less accessible parts of Wales.
13. I also want arts organisations to continue to engage with the Communities First programme to create more opportunities for people in our most deprived communities to experience and participate in what the arts have to offer.
14. The most recent data on attendance at arts events shows that attendance levels continue to improve year on year with 76% of adults attending an arts event in 2012.
15. Participation levels show an even more impressive increase with participation by adults increasing from 27% in 2011 to 40% in 2012, while participation levels amongst children and young people increased from 85% to 92% between 2010 and 2012.
16. Furthermore, I am keen to use every opportunity to use the arts to promote Wales internationally. We now have some very exciting opportunities to do so e.g. WOMEX, the world music Expo' in Cardiff in October, and the celebrations in 2014 to mark the centenary of Dylan Thomas's birth. There are also events further ahead such as the

Centenary of the Great War, and the Patagonia celebrations in 2015. These offer real opportunities for us and we must think creatively about how Government supports the arts in these crucial years..

Museums, Archives and Libraries

17. We are also working hard to help create first class libraries, museums and archives. In particular, I am delighted that the Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales is celebrating the fact that a record breaking 1.75 million people visited its sites over the last 12 months – the best year ever.
18. In addition, St Fagans is already the UK's favourite visitor attraction and a world class facility. Our new Lottery-backed project will ensure that it becomes a world leader that better tells the story of all the people of Wales. This redevelopment will provide an excellent opportunity for us to learn more about our culture and heritage, and it will attract many more visitors from outside Wales, providing a very welcome boost to our economy.
19. On the international stage, an Amgueddfa Cymru exhibition recently opened in the world renowned China Three Gorges Museum in Chongqing. The exhibition "*Wales, Land of the Red Dragon*", is part of an ongoing two way cultural exchange between Wales and China and will act as an introduction to Wales by featuring many important object from the various collections of the National Museum.
20. Museums have a key role to play in addressing poverty and our partnership with Kids in Museums is a wonderful example of this. I am committed to raising standards in museums in Wales and encouraging all museums to become involved in the Museum Accreditation scheme.
21. Grant funding to museums in Wales from the Welsh Government has been maintained and will fund strategic all Wales projects and specific museum projects that encourage improvement in services.
22. Our public libraries are also working alongside schools and other partners to make a major contribution to promoting literacy from an early age. In 2011-12 over 3.5 million children's books were loaned by our public libraries. Improving literacy levels is fundamental in tackling poverty.
23. Public libraries also have an increasingly important role in providing free public access to the internet, enabling those people without the internet at home to access the increasing number of public services that are primarily delivered online. The National Library's recently-launched Welsh Newspapers Online resource will also provide free online access to two million pages of historical newspapers. Elsewhere, our archives will be increasing on-line access for users through the provision of an

item-level catalogue. They will also increase the capacity of local archive services to manage and preserve born-digital archives.

Historic Environment

24. The historic environment is central to our culture in Wales. It is a shared resource and part of our collective inheritance.
25. I therefore welcome this Committee's Inquiry into our Historic Environment Policy and I was delighted to respond on behalf of the Welsh Government on 25 April 2013. I am looking forward to carrying through the commitments made in that response for the benefit of the historic environment sector and the people of Wales.
26. Heritage and the historic environment contributes around £840 million to Wales' GVA and supports around 30,000 full-time equivalent jobs.
27. In 2012-2013, 1.2 million people visited our staff monuments, and a further 1.2 million visited unstaffed monuments. There were 94,500 educational visits to Cadw heritage sites. In the same year, Cadw sites generated £4.6m income.
28. 43,400 people participated in community and outreach programmes delivered by Cadw, and a further 25,500 attended events by the Royal Commission and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts.
29. The £19m EU Convergence funded Heritage Tourism Project is helping to harness the rich heritage of Wales to maximise the economic value of heritage through increasing the volume, length and value of visits within and to Wales. Work is due to be completed soon on renewed interpretation and improved visitor access at Caerphilly Castle, Blaenavon Ironworks, Swansea Castle, St Davids Bishop's Palace, Llanddwyn Island and Dyfi Furnace. 78.5% historic environment assets are in a stable or improved condition
30. My updated Historic Environment Strategy for Wales sets out my aspirations for the historic environment sector.
<http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/historicenvironment/policy/historicenvironments>
31. The Strategy was developed in response to comments and feedback from the public and the historic environment sector during extensive consultations undertaken during 2012.
32. In addition, I am seeking to introduce a Heritage Bill (and associated measures) to the National Assembly in early 2015. The Bill will aim to improve the way Cadw manages historic environment policy and to help historic environment continue to deliver meaningful economic, social and environmental benefits to the people of Wales. There will be a further opportunity for comment when a consultation paper on the proposals for the Bill is published in summer 2013.

33. The Bill, the Strategy, and its supporting activity frameworks, are the three pillars which define the strategic focus of the Welsh Government's approach to the historic environment.
34. The Strategy includes priorities for action to enhance young people's life chances and tackling poverty through access to cultural experiences. Community archaeology projects are already providing young people with new opportunities. For example, Cadw projects at Segontium and at Llanmelin near Caerwent, offer young people activities which provide creative and personal development opportunities as well as ways to get involved with their local heritage.
35. A key element of the sustainable management of our heritage is in the fostering of traditional building skills. Training young people and adults through apprenticeships, work experience and tuition on traditional building projects can help foster confidence and help tackle poverty. It also adds to a scarce skill resource vital to sustaining our pre-1919 built heritage.
36. Furthermore Cadw has prioritised developing a broad lifelong learning programme including a new Lifelong Learning Framework for the historic environment sector in Wales, which will be published this summer. Cadw continues to develop its education programme using the monuments in a creative and appealing way to engage children and young people in a range of subjects on the curriculum.
37. I firmly believe that there are real benefits through the opportunities created for participation in arts and heritage activity for Welsh people. Cadw's Arts and Heritage Framework sets out the commitment to working with the arts by developing a lively programme for a three year period 2012-15 and piloting different themes and approaches. An artist-in-residence programme has now begun with the first project at Valle Crucis Abbey. Cadw will continue to develop best practice in working with the arts at its heritage sites and its vibrant events programme.
38. Heritage-led regeneration can mean that our towns are better places to live because we work with the grain and character of their historic origins and growth to develop them for 21st century living. Cadw and Regeneration officials have been working closely to align their activities which include inventive uses for disused buildings. Imaginative and creative use of the monuments in State care for the benefit of local people and visitors means heritage sites play a vital and contemporary role in strengthening communities.
39. The ground breaking all-Wales Interpretation Plan helps tell our stories in a vibrant and engaging way, capturing the imagination of young people and families alike. A visit to sites improved through our Heritage Tourism Project, such as Conwy Castle, shows how far Cadw has moved forward in presenting our heritage to diverse audiences.

Furthermore, we are looking to develop what is offered at our top, iconic heritage sites to support our strategic tourism objectives.

40. Elsewhere, Cadw is playing its part in delivering actions to halt or reverse biodiversity loss in Wales. At Denbigh Castle, when the decision was made to replace the visitor centre, the ecology survey report was re-visited and updated, and a bat survey undertaken. Provisions were implemented prior to works starting and also an intermediate survey was done during the construction period.
41. The building included compliance with BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) requirements. The team specified a 'green meadow' area within the Castle grounds which is made up of mixed sedum seeds and also a 'green' sedum roof.
42. At Harlech Castle an ecology survey identified that bats were present and were roosting. With a proposal for the installation of new floors, Cadw applied for a licence to re-locate the Bats (a European Protected Species) and a purpose-built bat roost which was installed in an adjacent tower, and was on flight path of the bats. A further study will be undertaken in the next few months to ascertain if the bats have taken up residency.
43. As part of the interpretation it is proposed that CCTV cameras will be positioned within the bat roost and linked to monitors so that members of the public can view the bats in their new environment.

Sport

44. Sport is capable of enriching our lives, by providing opportunities for enjoyment and personal fulfilment. It inspires us and our children to express ourselves and to be creative. It also forms a crucial part of our sense of community
45. As a comparatively small country on the international stage we need to build on any potential opportunities that this sporting success provides. Already, we have countless examples of Wales a sporting country punching above its weight – the success of the Welsh rugby team, Cardiff City, Swansea City, Newport County and Wrexham this season – alongside the personal achievements of Gareth Bale, Becky James and Sam Warburton - and not forgetting our Olympic and Paralympic athletes.
46. Of course, all successful sports people have to start somewhere and we need to maximise opportunities for participation in grassroots sport, particularly for our young people. We also need to widen participation so that more women and girls, members of black and ethnic minorities and disabled people feel that sport is for them. Sport can also play a powerful role in bringing together and engaging people in our most disadvantaged communities.

47. We have already made significant progress. Sport Wales' Child Poverty Strategy and Community Strategy is targeting investment at the hard to reach and under-represented groups within our population and is prioritising sustained growth in participation in sport by women and girls. Disability Sport Wales report that over a million sporting opportunities were provided for young people and adults at grassroots level in 2012-12.
48. During the next year I will be working with Sport Wales to continue to deliver some of our key strategic priorities including :
- Supporting the grassroots development of our sports;
 - Strengthening the links between schools and communities;
 - Improving young people's physical literacy;
 - Providing more coaches and encouraging more volunteers;
 - Targeting investment and support to improve opportunities for sustained sports participation in areas of greatest need; and
 - Using sport to help to eradicate child poverty.
49. I will also be playing a leading role in taking forward our cross Government ambition to increase levels of physical activity across Wales. There is good scientific evidence that being physically active on a regular basis can help us all to lead healthier and happier lives and reduce the risk of many chronic conditions. This isn't simply about the physical benefits. Young people who lead unhealthy lifestyles are more likely to be excluded from social activities and education. It is clear that levels of physical activity among young people and adults have not risen over the last decade as we had hoped. I will review the evidence and our interventions in the light of this.
50. Our Free Swimming initiatives for children and young people and older people continues to be delivered successfully across all 22 local authorities in Wales. We are also working with Sport Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association and a number of local authorities to deliver and evaluate some pilot schemes to extend free swimming to veterans and serving armed forces personnel. The results of these pilots will be considered in the summer.
51. Sport Wales is already working with Public Health Wales to produce a delivery plan of joint actions to increase levels of physical activity and to complement or build on existing initiatives such as Change4Life and Let's Walk Cymru.

The Active Travel (Wales) Bill

52. The Bill is a key government measure aimed at transforming Wales' approach to travel. By imposing a duty on local authorities to properly plan and execute a network of well-designed walking and cycling routes it aims to make walking and cycling the most natural and normal way of getting about.
53. The duty requires local authorities to produce two maps: the first setting out their current walking and cycling provision; the second establishing their long term plan for a network that allows people to make purposeful journeys on cycle or foot on continuous routes that aim to be safe and comfortable and link to workplaces, schools, shops, services and other places people need to get to.
54. It will overcome one of the major problems of most current cycling provision: that it is often not continuous and will not allow real journeys to be made without potentially dangerous encounters with busy traffic.
55. Local authorities will have a duty to continuously improve their provision and to regularly refresh the maps as their networks develop. The maps will also be a useful tool for raising awareness of the networks and encouraging their use.
56. By focussing on purposeful, rather than recreational journeys, the Bill aims to encourage people to replace journeys made by car with active travel. This will result in significant health benefits, as people build physical activity into their everyday lives, and reduce emissions, benefiting the environment and reducing congestion - benefiting the economy.
57. It is recognised that providing the infrastructure alone will not cause people to change their travel habits and the Bill will be accompanied by an Active Travel Action Plan, currently under development, that will set out cross-governmental promotional and educational measures aimed at encouraging maximum use of the new networks.
58. This will involve, for example, working with schools and employers to improve facilities for those who choose not to go to school or work by car. There is clear evidence of the productivity bonus associated with employees who cycle to work with significantly improved rates of punctuality and reduced absence from sickness. A further boost to the economy.

Access and Outdoor Recreation

59. A further priority is to significantly increase opportunities for public access to the outdoors for the purposes of recreation and leisure. We have made a commitment under the Programme for Government to

improve public access to land and water, in particular for families and children. I am especially keen to find ways in which families and individuals from economically disadvantaged areas can be encouraged to take advantage of the recreational opportunities that Wales has to offer, especially bearing in mind the health benefits of increasing physical activity.

60. Access and outdoor recreation is currently focussed on traditional users, such as walkers, cyclists, anglers and horse riders. Demand for a wider range of opportunities for recreation and leisure, such as canoeing is increasing. Taking full advantage of the potential of Wales for outdoor recreation activities could provide a significant economic boost to the rural economy.
61. The Wales Coast Path, which was successfully launched in May 2012 has demonstrated how effective marketing Wales as an outdoor destination can be at drawing social and economic benefits. Research indicates that 2.89 million people used the Wales Coast Path between October 2011 and September 2012 and estimates that the path attracted 1.6 million day visitors and 835,000 overnight stays. Expenditure relating to these trips is around £33.2 million which equates to an impressive £16.1 million of Gross Value Added.
62. Funding for the Coast Path since 2007/8 has amounted to £10.5 million and will continue for a further two years (2013/14 – 2014/15) at £1.15 million per year in order to continue more extensive improvements to coastal access – namely circular and other connecting routes.
63. I am keen to promote greater access to inland water for recreation. For this reason, I have agreed to continue the SPLASH grants scheme. Since 2008/9 £2.6 million has been provided towards local level initiatives via SPLASH. Whilst the fund has provided opportunities for many people to enjoy our water resource for recreation, its impact in creating new access provision has been somewhat limited.
64. I expect this year's funding to prioritise opening up new areas for water recreation, and for Natural Resources Wales, who administer the fund, to assist where it can in supporting opening up our waterways and lakes for recreation.
65. I also want to increase the number and use of accessible green spaces in populated areas for the benefit of local communities. Green spaces would include parks, land used for active recreation and tranquil areas.
66. Within this, I would also like to see included areas for community gardening and a growth in the number of allotments available in urban areas.
67. To complement this and the Active Travel Bill I intend to make improvements to existing legislation on public rights of way and access

to the countryside. Taking a fresh look at how we provide access to green spaces and the wider countryside is critical to increasing public participation in outdoor recreation. The method and extent of reform will be the subject of consultation with stakeholders later in the year.

Protected Landscapes

68. It is just as important that we have a shared understanding of the environment, economy, and health of communities within our designated landscapes. To this end a new policy statement for these areas is being prepared which will also include indicators against the key outcomes we would like to see being achieved. This will help identify priorities and focus effort.
69. Once the policy statement is in place, I will turn my attention to reviewing national park governance. There hasn't been a review of the national parks since 2004, and much has changed since then in terms of the regulation of the environment, the creation of Natural Resource Wales, and increased expectation that the designated landscapes play a vital role in sustainable development.
70. The findings of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery will provide a wider context for this review, and so the detail of what we will look at in terms of the National Park Authorities will be determined later this year.

John Griffiths AM
Minister for Culture & Sport
May 2013